

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0434

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT LT SF

SUBJ: CHIEF JONATHAN AND VORSTER MEET

REF : PRETORIA 1466

1. PRIME MINISTER CHIEF LEABUA JONATHAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER MET APR 8 AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT JOHANNESBURG TO DISCUSS RELATIONS BETWEEN THEIR TWO COUNTRIES. LESOTHO RELEASE SAYS THEY CLEARED UP MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND REAFFIRMED BELIEF THAT BOTH COUNTRIES BASED THEIR RELATIONS ON PRINCIPLE OF GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS. THEY SAID NEITHER COUNTRY WOULD INTERFERE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF OTHER AND BOTH COMMITTED TO PEACE IN REGION AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN REGION AS A WHOLE.

2. PUBLICIZED MEETING REPRESENTS A CONSIDERABLE SHIFT FROM JONATHAN'S HARSH ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN ATTITUDE WHICH FOUND FULLEST EXPRESSION ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO. SOURCE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE SAYS MEETING LOGICAL AND NECESSARY AS
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RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA HAD REACHED SUCH A LOW SOME-

THING HAD TO BE DONE.

3. WE BELIEVE JONATHAN'S MEETING WITH VORSTER IN LARGE PART BASED ON PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LESOTHO'S ECONOMIC REALITIES. RECENT RETURN OF WELKOM MINERS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE HAS BROUGHT LESOTHO'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE BACK INTO FOCUS. FINANCE MINISTER SEKHONYANA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN STAGE MANAGER FOR MEETING AND PROBABLY HAD MAJOR ROLE IN INFLUENCING JONATHAN'S ATTENDANCE.

4. PRIME MINISTER MAY ALSO HAVE ACTED AS RESULT OF REFLECTION ON WHERE LESOTHO AND BNP HEADED. HE IS SAID TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF DIRECTION OF AND SUPPORT FOR HIS PARTY AND HE RECENTLY SOUGHT ADVICE OF 16 "INTELLECTUALS" WHO WERE ONCE IMPORTANT BNP FIGURES BUT WHO WERE PURGED FROM PARTY IN 1972 BY HARD-LINE ELEMENTS WHO WANTED PARTY POLICY ESTABLISHED ONLY AT HIGHEST LEVEL. BETTER RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA BASED ON LESOTHO'S OBVIOUS NEEDS HAS BEEN ONE OF "INTELLECTUALS'" MAJOR POINTS AND IT POSSIBLE JONATHAN MAY HAVE LISTENED.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER PEETE PEETE, ONE OF BNP'S HARDEST LINERS, HAD NO ROLE IN JONATHAN-VORSTER MEETING AND HIS MINISTRY WAS KEPT IN DARK. WE SURMISE THIS WAS NOT ACCIDENTAL; PEETE HAS CONSTANTLY URGED BRINKMANSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA TO HELP PRODUCE CLOSEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH OAU AND ARAB STATES.

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